

St Peter and St Paul Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Liz Caluori
Setting address	St Peter & St Paul Church, Parkstone Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2NT
Telephone number	07788603221
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

St Peter and St Paul's Playgroup is a committee-run provision which opened in 1971 and operates from a room within the church building. It is situated in a residential area of Hastings close to local shops and schools. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 46 children on roll. The playgroup is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup operates for 38 weeks of the year offering morning sessions from 9am to 12 noon from Monday to Friday and afternoon sessions from 12 noon to 3pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

There are eight staff employed to work with the children, of whom four hold appropriate childcare qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. A minimum of three staff are present each session including two who are qualified.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and safe in the inclusive environment. They take part in activities which extend their learning and development although the pre-school has yet to establish robust systems to monitor their development and plan for their next steps. Children benefit from the positive relationships in place with their parents and carers but arrangements to communicate with other early years practitioners are less well established. The management and staff team are committed to improving the service provided but have yet to undertake any significant self-evaluation.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- extend the range of resources set out for children to access independently to cover all areas of learning and to promote greater independence in their learning
- improve the systems in place to support staff to monitor children's progress in order to support them to plan for children's next steps and ensure that each child is being offered an appropriate level of challenge across all areas of learning and to identify any gaps in achievement
- undertake more evaluation of the provision, taking into account the views of

parents, carers and children in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses and prioritise improvements

- put in place arrangements to identify which children also attend other early years settings and to share information about their learning and development in order to ensure consistent and coordinated care.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Strong focus is placed on keeping children safe whilst also ensuring that they are able to develop an appropriate level of independence. Risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that potential hazards are identified and addressed. In addition, effective recruitment procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitably qualified and fully vetted adults. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and staff are trained to identify the potential signs and symptoms of abuse.

The committee, management and staff team recognise the importance of continually improving their service and have recently begun to update and extend the range of policies and procedures. This reflection of practices is in its early stages and has yet to extend to canvassing the views of parents, carers and children in order to identify strengths and weakness and prioritise areas for improvement.

Staff undertake observations of the children and this supports them to set out activities which they are confident will be popular. However, the systems in place are not yet sufficiently developed to effectively monitor children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. As a result, whilst children are making progress in all areas, staff are not able to effectively monitor the rate of their development to ensure that they are being appropriately challenged.

Children are provided with a satisfactory range of resources although there are times when there are not enough of a certain type of toy, for example construction materials, set out for all of the children who wish to play with it. The organisation of the room does not routinely ensure that there are resources to cover all areas of learning, for example during a session that had opportunities for physical play, painting, mark making and problem solving the children did not have access to any resources to support imaginative play. However, the toys that are set out are very effectively used by the children and successfully capture their interest. All children are cared for in one room enabling staff to supervise them easily. Space is set aside for indoor physical play using a climbing frame with slide and stepping stones.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the building is accessible to wheelchair users. Staff are also able to support children and families for whom English is an additional language. There are some toys and books which promote positive images of diversity and children take part in activities aimed at learning about different cultures and traditions.

Positive relationships are in place with parents and carers and they receive a friendly greeting as they deliver and collect their children. There is also a very well established tradition of parents and carers volunteering in the pre-school. A range of written information is provided including the procedure to be followed should they wish to make a complaint. Staff are currently working with the local primary schools in order to aid children's transitions into the receptions class. However, there is no system in place to routinely share information about children's progress and development with other early years providers, such as childminders, involved in caring for children throughout the week.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children play very happily with their friends, developing good social skills and becoming independent in their learning as result of the freedom they receive to investigate their environment and select the activities they wish to take part in. However, they are sometimes restricted in their exploration by the limited range of resources set out. Children respond very well to the warm, caring and very good humoured interaction of staff. They enjoy a range of interesting and well thought out activities and experiences which are planned to reflect their interests although there is a general lack of coordination and monitoring. As a result there are times when the opportunities offered do not cover all areas of children's learning.

Staff make good use of naturally occurring situations to extend children's learning, for example by encouraging them to work out how many more plates are needed when setting up for snacks. There are also many charming conversations taking place throughout the day and children use language very effectively to express their views and share stories. Their efforts are praised by staff as is their good behaviour and, as a result, they are developing good self-esteem. They are polite, friendly and extremely caring, spontaneously telling the staff and their friends that they love them.

Children are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world by enjoying a range of outings including the local sea life centre, a wild life park and the library. They also welcome visitors throughout the year including representatives from the police and fire services. A range of strategies are in place to support children in their transitions to school including physical education sessions during which they practice dressing and undressing independently.

A good level of support is offered to help children understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They benefit from the strong focus placed on promoting their physical development and learn about the effect that exercise has on their bodies. They enjoy nutritious snacks including items such as cheese, crackers, fruit and salad and drinks are constantly available. Children are developing good personal care routines, washing their hands after using the toilet and before sitting down to eat.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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